

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF RELATIONS FROM RHETORICAL STRUCTURE THEORY

[This listing has been drawn by Austin Hale primarily from two articles by Mann and Thompson (1986 and 1988). Definitions in parentheses are from the earlier work but are helpful for their transparency.]

Where several relational propositions arise from the same two parts of the text, they need not all have the same communicative status. They may not all have the same role in creating coherence of the text. Thus where "sequence" and "cause" co-occur it may be that "cause" is the relationship which is perceived to hold two parts of a particular text together, with "sequence" being entirely derivable from it. (1986:65)

1.0 Antithesis (P, SN)

(Two conceptions are contrasted with the speaker committing to the one and decommitting from the other. The thesis is rejected and the antitheses advocated. This was called "Thesis-Antithesis" in the earlier article (1986:66).)

Constraints on N: W has positive regard for the situation presented in N.

Constraints on the N + S combination: The situations presented in N and S are in contrast (cf. CONTRAST, i.e., are (a) comprehended as the same in many respects, (b) comprehended as differing in a few respects and (c) compared with respect to one or more of these differences); because of an incompatibility that arises from the contrast, one cannot have positive regard for both the situations presented in N and S; comprehending S and the incompatibility between the situations presented in N and S increases R's positive regard for the situation presented in N.

The effect: R's positive regard for N is increased.

Locus of the effect: N

From an editorial in The Hartford Courant:

Text Example: (1) 'Every rule has exceptions, (2) but the tragic and too-common tableaux of hundreds or even thousands of people snake-lining up for any task with a paycheck illustrates a lack of jobs, (3) not laziness.'

(1) is a Concession Satellite to the Nucleus (2-3). (3) is an Antithesis Satellite to the Nucleus (2).

Text Examples (1986): --We don't want orange juice. We want apple juice.

--This book claims to be a guide to all the trees of Indiana. It's so incomplete that it doesn't even have oak trees in it.

--Players want the referee to balance a bad call benefitting one team with a bad call benefitting the other.

As a referee, I just want to call each play as I see it.

2.0 Background (P, SN)

(Sometimes one part of a text provides background information without which the other part of the text cannot be adequately comprehended.)

Constraints on N: R won't comprehend N sufficiently before reading text of S.

Constraints on the N + S combination: S increases the ability of R to comprehend an element in N.

The effect: R's ability to comprehend N increases.

Locus of the effect: N.

Text Example: (1) 'Home addresses and telephone numbers of public employees will be protected from public disclosure under a new bill approved by Gov. George Deukmejian. (2) Assembly Bill 3100 amends the Government Code, (3) which required that the public records of all state and local agencies, containing home addresses and telephone numbers of staff, be open to public inspection.' [1 <- (2-3) background] (or [background 1 -> 2 <- 3 background])

Text Example (1986): --(1) Hayes just resigned. (2) He's our chancellor.

[1 <-2 background]

3.0 Circumstance (SM)

(One part of the text establishes a circumstance or situation. The other part is interpreted within or relative to that circumstance or situation.) (Similar to Grimes' "setting".)

Constraints on S: S presents a situation (not unrealized)

Constraints on the N + S combination: S sets a framework in the subject matter within which R is intended to interpret the situation presented in N.

The effect: R recognizes that the situation presented in S provides the framework for interpreting N.

Locus of the effect: N and S

Text Example: (1) 'Probably the most extreme case of Visitor's Fever I have ever witnessed was a few summers ago (2) when I visited relatives in the Midwest.' [1 < 2 circumstance]

Text Example: 'P.M. has been with KUSC longer than any other staff member. While attending Occidental College, where he majored in philosophy, he volunteered to work as the station as a classical music announcer. That was in 1970

Text Examples (1986): --I went hitchhiking in Norway. Nobody would pick me up.

--He walked slowly toward the bus station. He was thinking about the fight he'd had with Ken.

--She got ready to go into the dive. Her hands were cold and clammy.

4.0 Concession (P, SN)

(Speaker acknowledges the truth of a point in one part of the text which potentially detracts from a point in another part of the text. The concession is an agreement with a possible objection.)

Constraints on N: W has a positive regard for the situation presented in N.

Constraints on S: W is not claiming that the situation presented in S doesn't hold.

Constraints on the N + S combination: W acknowledges a potential or apparent incompatibility between the situations presented in N and S; W regards the situations presented in N and S as compatible; recognizing that the compatibility between the situations presented in N and S increases R's positive regard for the situation presented in N.

The effect: R's positive regard for the situation presented in N is increased.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: (Title) 'Dioxin' (1) 'Concern that this material is harmful to health or the environment may be misplaced. (2) Although it is toxic to certain animals, (3) evidence is lacking that it has any serious long-term effect on human beings.' [(2-3) is Elaboration Satellite to (1). (2) is Concessive Satellite to (3).]

Text Example (1986): --I know you have great credentials. You don't fit the job description because this job requires someone with extensive experience.

5.0 Condition (SM, SN)

(One proposition provides the condition under which the other proposition holds.)

Constraints on S: S presents a hypothetical, future, or otherwise unrealized situation (relative to the situational context of S).

Constraints on the N + S combination: Realization of the situation presented in N depends on realization of that presented in S.

The effect: R recognizes how the realization of the situation presented in N depends on the realization of the situation presented in S.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: 'Employees are urged to complete new beneficiary designation forms for retirement or life insurance benefits whenever there is a change in marital or family status. We have recently had cases where divorced spouses have received benefits because the employee neglected to complete a new beneficiary form designating a new spouse or child.'

Text Example (1986): --Slowly stir the powder into the fluid. The mixture will be very thick.

6.0 Contrast (SM)

(This relation is new in the 1988 paper.)

Constraints on N: Multi-nuclear.

Constraints on the N + S combination: No more than two nuclei; the situations presented in these two nuclei are (a) comprehended as the same in many respects (b) comprehended as differing in a few respects and (c) compared with respect to one or more of these differences.

The effect: R recognizes the comparability and the difference(s) yielded by the comparison being made.

Locus of the effect: multiple nuclei

Abstract from Scientific American:

Text Example: 'Animals heal, but trees compartmentalize. They endure a lifetime of injury and infection by setting boundaries that resist the spread of the invading micro-organisms.'

7.0 Elaboration (SM, NS)

(One part expresses a generalization of which the other part is an instance. One part of the text elaborates or further specifies the concepts conveyed by the other part.)

Constraints on the N + S combination: S presents additional detail about the situation or some element of subject matter which is presented in N or inferentially accessible in N in one or more of the ways listed below. In the list, if N presents the first member of any pair, then S includes the second. (Examples are from the 1986 paper.)

1. set : member --I love to collect classic automobiles. My favorite car is my 1899 Duryea.
2. abstract : instance --Your performance distresses me. You come in drunk and you insult the bus boy.
3. whole : part --Karen is so photogenic. Her smile is perfect.
4. process : step --It's time to make our cake. I'm going to take out the milk and eggs.
5. object : attribute --I'm Officer Jordan. I was born in 1952 and I joined the police force in 1970.
6. generalization : specific --I like ice cream. I have a real sweet tooth.

The effect: R recognizes the situation presented in S as providing additional detail for N. R identifies the element of subject matter for which detail is provided.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: (From a conference announcement brochure: 'Sanga-Saby-Kursgard, Sweden, will be the site of the 1969 International Conference on Computational Linguistics, September 1-4. It is expected that some 250 linguists will attend from Asia, West Europe, East Europe including Russia, and the United States. The conference will be concerned with the applications of mathematical and computer techniques to the study of natural languages, the development of computer programs as tools for linguistic research, and the application of linguistics to the development of man-machine communication systems.'

8.0 Enablement (P, NS)

(One part of the text provides information that enables the addressee to comply with a directive or take advantage of an offer.)

Constraints on N: Presents R action (including accepting an offer), unrealized with respect to the context of N.

Constraints on the N + S combination: R comprehending S increases R's potential ability to perform the action presented in N.

The effect: R's potential ability to perform the action presented in N increases.

Locus of the effect: N

Text Example: 'Training on jobs. A series of informative, inexpensive pamphlets and books on worker health discusses such topics as filing a compensation claim, ionizing radiation, asbestos, and several occupational diseases.'

Text Examples (1986): --I'll give you a free tour of the development. My phone number is 555-9876.
--Could you open the door? Here's the key.

9.0 Evaluation (SM)

(New in the 1988 paper)

Constraints on the N + S combination: S relates the situation in N to the degree of W's positive regard toward the situation presented in N.

The effect: R recognizes the the situation presented in S assesses the situation presented in N and recognizes the value it assigns.

Locus of the effect: N and S

From an advertisement:

Text Example: (1) 'Features like our uniquely sealed jacket and protective hub ring make our discs last longer. (2) And a soft inner liner cleans the ultra-smooth disc surface while in use. (3) It all adds up to better performance and reliability.' 1(1-2) <- (3) evaluation]

10.0 Evidence (P, NS)

(One part of a text provides evidence for a claim put forth in another part. Evidence can support a claim that an event occurred or it can rationalize the speaker's belief that the claim is true.)

Constraints on N: R might not believe N to a degree satisfactory to W.

Constraints on S: The reader believes S or will find it credible.

Constraints on the N + S combination: R's comprehending S increases R's belief of N.

The effect: R's belief of N is increased.

Locus of the effect: N

From a letter to the editor of BYTE magazine:

Text Example: (1) 'The program as published for calendar year 1980 really works. (2) In only a few minutes, I entered all the figures from my 1980 tax return and (3) got a result which agreed with my hand calculations to the penny.' (1) is Nucleus and (2-3) is Evidence Satellite. (Similar to Longacre's Attestation.)

Text Examples (1986): --Jenny's not coming. Her mother just called from San Diego. (Illustrates rationalization of speaker's belief.)

--They're having a party again next door. I couldn't find a parking place.

--Smith seems to have a new girlfriend. He's been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.

11.0 Interpretation (SM)

Constraints on the N + S combination: S relates the situation presented in N to a framework of ideas not involved in N itself and not concerned with W's positive regard.

The effect: R recognizes that S relates the situation presented in N to a framework of ideas not involved in the knowledge presented in N itself.

Locus of the effect: N and S

Text Example: 'Steep declines in capital spending commitments and building permits, along with a drop in the money stock pushed the leading composite down for the fifth time in the past 11 months to a level 0.5% below its high in May 1984. Such a decline is highly unusual at this stage in an expansion.'

12.0 Joint

The schema called JOINT has no corresponding relation. The schema is multinuclear, and no relation is claimed to hold between the nuclei.

Text Example: 'Employees are urged to complete new beneficiary designation forms for retirement or life insurance benefits whenever there is a change in marital or family status.'

...

Employees who are not sure of who is listed as their beneficiary should complete new forms since the retirement system and the insurance carrier use the most current form to disburse benefits.'

13.0 Justify (P, SN) (Authority)

(One part attempts to establish the appropriateness or acceptability of performing speech acts performed in the other part.)

Constraints on the N + S combination: R's comprehending S increases R's readiness to accept W's right to present N.
The effect: R's readiness to accept W's right to present N is increased.
Locus of the effect: N.

From the electronic bulletin board at ISI:

Text Example: (1) 'The next music day is scheduled for July 21 (Saturday), noon-midnight. (2) I'll post more details later, (3) but this is a good time to reserve the place on your calendar. [(2) is Concessive Satellite to Nucleus (3). (2-3) is Justify Satellite to Nucleus (1)]

Text Examples (1986): --Let me be perfectly clear. I am not a crook.

--(1) I'm Officer Krupke. (2) You're under arrest. [1 justify -> 2]

--(1) I'm the moderator of this meeting. (2) Your motion is out of order. [1 justify -> 2]

14.0 Motivation (P)

(One part of the text supplies motivation for complying with a directive in another part.)

Constraints on N: Presents an action in which R is the actor (including accepting an offer), unrealized with respect to the context of N.

Constraints on the N + S combination: Comprehending S increases R's desire to perform action presented in N.

The effect: R's desire to perform action presented in N is increased

Locus of the effect: N

From a personal message on an electronic bulletin board:

Text Example: 'The Los Angeles Chamber Ballet (the ballet company I'm dancing with) is giving four concerts next week ... Tickets are \$7.50 except for the opening night... The show is made up of new choreography and should be very entertaining. I'm in three pieces.'

Text Examples (1986): --Take Bufferin. The buffering component prevents excess stomach acid.

--Go jogging with me this afternoon. You'll be full of energy.

15.0 Non-Volitional Cause (SM)

(Cause: One part of the text presents a cause for a condition conveyed by the other portion. There are many cases where both sequence and cause relations hold.)

Constraints on N: Presents a situation that is not a volitional action.

Constraints on the N + S combination: S presents a situation that, by means other than motivating a volitional action, caused the situation presented in N; without the presentation of S, R might not know the particular cause of the situation; a presentation of N is more central than S to W's purposes in putting forth the N-S combination.

The effect: R recognizes the situation presented in S as a cause of the situation presented in N.

Locus of the effect: N and S

From an institutional advertisement:

Text Example: '...we've been able to mine our own iron ore, coal, manganese, dolomite, all the materials we need to make our own steel. And because we can mine more than we need, we've had plenty of manganese and iron ore for export.'

An abstract from Scientific American:

Text Example: 'The Transfer of Technology to Underdeveloped Countries.

The elimination of mass poverty is necessary to supply the motivation for fertility control in such countries. Other countries should assist in this process, not least because they have a moral obligation to do so.'

Text Examples (1986): --There were landslides in Malibu last week. Four neighborhoods lost their electricity.
 --I went riding last week. I was sore for three days.
 --The highway department set up a jack hammer in my parking place. I took two Fizzy-Saltzars.

16.0 Non-Volitional Result (SM)

Constraints on S: Presents a situation that is not a volitional action.

Constraints on the N + S combination: N presents a situation that caused the situation presented in S; presentation of N is more central to W's purposes in putting forth the N-S combination than is the presentation of S.

The effect: R recognizes that the situation presented in N could have caused the situation presented in S.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: 'The blast, the worst industrial accident in Mexico's history, destroyed the plant and most of the surrounding suburbs. Several thousand people were injured, and about 300 are still in hospital.'

17.0 Otherwise (SM)

Constraints on N: Presents an unrealized situation.

Constraints on S: Presents an unrealized situation.

Constraints on the N + S combination: Realization of the situation presented in N prevents realization of the situation presented in S.

The effect: R recognizes the dependency relation of prevention between the realization of the situation presented in N and the realization of the situation presented in S.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

From an administrative memo on an electronic bulletin board:

Text Example: 'It's new brochure time, and that means a chance for new project write-ups. Anyone desiring to update their entry in this brochure should have their copy in by Dec. 1. Otherwise the existing entry will be used.'

18.0 Purpose (SM, NS)

Constraints on N: Presents an activity.

Constraints on S: Presents a situation that is unrealized.

Constraints on the N + S combination: S presents a situation to be realized through the activity in N.

The effect: R recognizes that the activity in N is initiated in order to realize S.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: 'To see which Syncom diskette will replace the ones you're using now, send for our free "Flexi-Finder" selectionguide and the name of the supplier nearest you.'

Text Example: 'Presumably, there is a competition among trees in certain forest environments to become as tall as possible so as to catch as much of the sun as possible for photosynthesis.'

19.0 Restatement (SM, NS)

(The second part of the text restates the first part.)

Constraints on the N + S combination: S restates N, where S and N are of comparable bulk.

The effect: R recognizes S as a restatement of N.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: 'A WELL-GROOMED CAR REFLECTS ITS OWNER The car you drive says a lot about you.'

Text Example (1986): --He sure beat me up. I really took a thrashing from him.

20.0 Sequence (SM)

(Two parts of the text convey events, where the second is understood to follow the first.)

Constraints on N: Multi-nuclear.

Constraints on the N + S combination: A succession relationship between the situations is presented in the nuclei.

The effect: R recognizes the succession relationships among the nuclei.
Locus of the effect: multiple nuclei

Text Example: 'Peel oranges and slice crosswise. Arrange in a bowl and sprinkle with rum and coconut. Chill until ready to serve.'

Text Examples (1986): --The huge rod was released at an altitude of about 6 miles. It struck with such force that it buried itself deep into the ground.

21.0 Solutionhood (SM, SN)

One part poses a problem. The other part provides a solution.)

Constraints on S: Presents a problem.

Constraints on the N + S combination: The situation presented in N is a solution to the problem stated in S.

The effect: R recognizes the situation presented in N as a solution to the problem presented in S.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: (1) 'One difficulty ... is with sleeping bags in which down and feather fillers are used as insulation.

(2) This insulation has a tendency to slip towards the bottom. (3) You can redistribute the filler....'

[(1-2) <- 3 solutionhood]

Text Example (1986): --I'm hungry. Let's go to the Fuji Gardens.

--Do you want to get your Easter tan early, even in the rain? Come to the Tanning Connection in Sherman Oaks.

In the definition of the solutionhood relation, the terms problem and solution are broader than one might expect. The scope of problem includes:

1. questions
2. requests, including requests for information
3. some descriptions of desires, goals intellectual issues, gaps in knowledge or other expressions of needs.
4. conditions that carry negative values, either expressly or culturally, including calamities and frustrations.

It thus compares to Grimes' Response predicate (Grimes, 1975).

22.0 Summary (SM)

Constraints on N: N must be more than one unit.

Constraints on the N + S combination: S presents a restatement of the content of N, that is shorter in bulk.

The effect: R recognizes S as a shorter restatement of N.

Locus of the effect: N and S

Text Example: 'For top quality performance from your computer, use the flexible discs known for memory excellence. It's a great way to improve your memory and get a big bonus in computer performance.'

23.0 Volitional Cause (SM)

(=Reason (1986:62) One part provides a rationale for the volitional action expressed in the other part.)

Constraints on N: Presents a volitional action or a situation that could have arisen from a volitional action.

Constraints on the N + S combination: S presents a situation that could have caused the agent of the volitional action in N to perform that action; without the presentation of S, R might not regard the action as motivated or know the particular motivation; N is more central to W's purposes in putting forth the N-S combination than is S.

The effect: R recognizes the situation presented in S as a cause for the volitional action presented in N.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Text Example: 'Writing has almost become impossible so we had the typewriter serviced and I may learn to type decently after all these years.'

Text Examples (1986): --(1) I'm not going to start learning Dutch. (2) You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

[1 < Volitional Cause -2]

--I'm going to the corner. The walk will do me good.

--Sally is going to the Good Earth. She likes their spice tea.

24.0 Volitional Result (SM)

Constraints on S: Presents a volitional action or a situation that could have arisen from a volitional action.

Constraints on the N + S combination: N presents a situation that could have caused the situation presented in S; the situation presented in N is more central to W's purposes than is that presented in S.

The effect: R recognizes that the situation presented in N could be a cause for the action or situation presented in S.

Locus of the effect: N and S.

Two examples from one personal letter:

Text Example: 'Using thumbs is not the problem but heredity is, and the end result is no use of thumbs if I don't do something now.'

Text Example: 'Writing has almost become impossible so we had the typewriter serviced and I may learn to type decently after all these years.'

((1986:63) The relations of evidence, justification, motivation, and reason (volitional cause) have proven easy to confuse. The following may help keep them sorted out:

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|--Non-Action ----> EVIDENCE (Evidence addresses facts, not actions.)
|
|   |--Immediate speech action ----> JUSTIFICATION (Justification addresses a speech act found within the
|   |                                     same text.)
|--Action--|
|           |--Reader's future action ----> MOTIVATION (Motivation addresses a potential action.)
|           |--Other--|
|           |--Other ----> REASON
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